



**Testimony Regarding
HB 6659: An Act Concerning The State Budget
For The Biennium Ending June 30, 2025
(Focused on human services agencies)**

**March 1, 2023
Luis Luna, Coalition Manager
HUSKY 4 Immigrants**

Senator Osten and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

I am Luis Luna, Coalition Manager for HUSKY 4 Immigrants, an immigrant-led and immigrant-centered coalition of groups and organizations advocating to open up HUSKY access to all who are eligible regardless of immigration status.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding HB 6659: An Act Concerning The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June 30, 2025, with respect to the budgets of the human services agencies, specifically for the Department of Social Services, which administers HUSKY (Medicaid and CHIP).

There are important priorities being funded in the Governor's Budget for human services agencies. However, this budget doesn't include sufficient funding to invest in equity and what all the people of Connecticut need for a thriving state – such as public education, nonprofit services, affordable housing, and health care.

Absent from the budget, for example, is expanding HUSKY up to age 26 for those who are income-eligible, regardless of immigration status. The coalition has estimated this would cost roughly \$18.4 million¹ and cover about 5,000² young people who are currently living without access to health insurance. The Department of Social Services has estimated the cost to be at least \$15 million.³ Hospitals would save money on

¹ Estimate is based on a [report by the RAND Corporation](#) and [data from the Migration Policy Institute](#)

² Estimate is based on a [report by the RAND Corporation](#) and [data from the Migration Policy Institute](#)

³ [Stated in February 14, 2023 testimony to Human Services Committee](#)

uncompensated care, community health clinics will have more insured patients, and the state would save money on reduced Emergency Medicaid spending.

This concept was raised and had a public hearing as HB 6616 – there are now over 700 written testimonies in support submitted, and 130 people spoke in support at the hearing. Not only that, expanding HUSKY to undocumented immigrants is *not* a controversial issue and is supported by Connecticut voters.

A solid majority of voters support expanding access to HUSKY health care coverage to all people who qualify by income in Connecticut, regardless of immigration status. 57% of voters support expanding HUSKY to ALL undocumented immigrants - - including 84% of Democrats, 83% of Black voters and 76% of Latinx voters⁴.

The policies passed in 2021 and 2022 are working – over 2,400 undocumented children ages 0-12 have already enrolled in HUSKY since the 1st of the year (when the program started), and last year over 1600 undocumented pregnant people accessed critical prenatal services. We can continue this progress by expanding to age 26.

There are a lot of critical priorities missing from the Governor's budget. We understand the benefit of some fiscal guardrails. Yet those same guardrails restrict the legislature's ability to fund policies that invest in equity.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Luis Luna

Husky 4 Immigrants.

⁴ [Research on Support for Allowing Undocumented Immigrants to Access Medicaid in Connecticut \(July 2022\)](#)